



St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Mumbai

BEST PRACTICE 1: SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMME (SIP)

Objectives:

The SIP aims at provoking students to work beyond minimum expectations by:

1. Making them critically consciousness of India's social, economic and political realities
2. Urging the college curricula to connect with social realities.
3. Inspiring students to become individuals who believe in being for and with others.

Context and Challenges:

First Year students offer 45 hours of voluntary social service with one of the 250 NGOs. Our two qualified Social Workers network between these NGOs and our students. Students also offer 5 hours of Discipline-Centric social work with any Department or Association. It is challenging to convince parents and students that education becomes wholesome through voluntary social service. Again, it is difficult to motivate departments to curate social activities based on their discipline's core.

Activities:

With the help of NGO mediation, our students participate in different SIP activities:

1. Awareness sessions on the prevention of TB, HIV, diabetes and malarial sicknesses. They assist social workers, paramedics and doctors during medical camps and in Community Centres of hospitals
2. Assisting in formal remedial and language enhancement classes as well as informal adult literacy programmes for economically vulnerable individuals.
3. Organisation of skill-building activities and training economically challenged individuals in making saleable items from recyclable materials.
4. Help poor city-dwellers in acquiring Government-issued Identity Cards, like, Aadhar, Ration, Voter ID and PAN Cards.
5. Aid the visually, physically and intellectually challenged individuals, by serving as 'shadow-teachers', examination writers, readers and digital transcribers of academic and non-academic materials.
6. Through Self-Help Groups, spread awareness about the evils of domestic violence, girl-child abuse, dowry and other feminine-issues.
7. Engaging with senior citizens who live in Homes for the Aged by spending quality time with them and interacting with them in various leisurely indoor activities.



Evidence of success

Via student volunteer testimonials

By exposing students' hearts and minds to unjust inequalities and depravation, SIP moulds them into becoming sensitive, compassionate and humane human beings. The following two testimonials bear witness to this lofty success. Ms Jahnvi Pandya (2015-2016) is convinced that SIP has made her realise and appreciate the value of giving back to society. Mr. Kanak J. Malu (2019-2020) while working with deprived children, hoped that both they and he would grow in knowledge and morals.

Problems and resources

1. Regular SIP-time clashes with accumulation of ECC hours and monthly CIAs.
2. Time mismatch exists between NGO's requirements and students' availability.
3. Overburdened faculty cannot dedicate quality time to SIP.
4. The Social Workers have to juggle between dialoguing with students on campus and engaging on field with NGOs.
5. Facility-wise, the SIP is hampered by the lack of: good continuous phone and internet connectivity and the computerisation of registrations and work-progress records.